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Letter dated 3 June 2008 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 31 March 2008 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

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Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. This report covers the period from 1 to 31 March 2008.

2. As at 31 March 2008, the total number of troops in theatre was 15,678. This includes 2,496 troops from non-NATO countries.

Political situation

3. At their meeting on 6 and 7 March, NATO Foreign Ministers reiterated that the Kosovo Force (KFOR) would continue fulfilling its security responsibilities throughout Kosovo under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

4. The Cabinet of the Serbian Prime Minister, Vojislav Kostunica, sent a proposal for the dissolution of Parliament to President Boris Tadic on 10 March 2008, and suggested that new parliamentary elections be held on 11 May 2008.

Security situation

5. On 3 March, 250 Kosovo Serbs gathered at the railway station in Zvecan and stopped train traffic for 20 minutes. The demonstration ended peacefully.

6. On 6 March, a French soldier was evacuated after being accidentally caught between two trucks at the petrol station in Novo Selo Compound.

7. On 6 and 7 March, Kosovo Albanians gathered in Urosevac and Gornje Prekaze for their annual "Night of Fire" commemoration to honour their war heroes. The monument to the Kosovo Albanian war hero Jashari in Gornje Prekaze was the final venue, with 50,000 participants on 7 March 2008.

8. On 9 March in Petrastica, 500 Kosovo Albanians gathered to celebrate Kosovo's declaration of independence.

9. On 10 March, approximately 50 Kosovo Serbs gathered peacefully outside the courthouse in northern Mitrovica with Serbian flags.

10. On 12 March, an explosion occurred in Istok destroying two shops, but no casualties were reported.

11. On 13 March, in Leposavic, an explosion damaged two vehicles in front of the local cultural house.

12. On 14 March, approximately 150 Kosovo Serbs gathered in front of the courthouse in Mitrovica and some entered the courthouse yard, raising the Serbian flag at a window.

13. On 15 March, approximately 50 Kosovo Serbs gathered in the courthouse yard and on the courthouse balcony with Serbian and United Nations flags. Approximately 20 people stayed overnight inside the building. In Podujevo, an unknown person threw a Molotov cocktail in the car park of a hotel. No casualties were reported.

14. On 17 March, after a formal request for support from UNMIK to KFOR, an operation to retake the courthouse was launched by UNMIK police supported by

KFOR. Seven platoons of the UNMIK formed police unit took part. UNMIK police arrested 35 Kosovo Serb protesters, while KFOR blocked off nearby roads. With KFOR assistance to clear the route, UNMIK police delivered the detainees to the detention facility in Pristina. However, as UNMIK attempted to transport the detainees to Pristina for processing, a large crowd gathered and started to throw stones, Molotov cocktails, grenades and other objects at the security forces; AK-47 rifles and pistols were also fired. UNMIK police and KFOR responded to the violence using tear gas, baton rounds and warning shots using live rounds in accordance with the agreed rules of engagement. In the end, 48 KFOR soldiers, 7 officers of the Kosovo Police Service and 35 UNMIK police officers were wounded, including a Ukrainian police officer who later died of his wounds. UNMIK police temporarily withdrew from northern Mitrovica, leaving KFOR to re-establish control of the courthouse and all areas in northern Mitrovica. The situation returned to calm, although around 400 protestors remained in the area.

15. On 19 March, UNMIK police and the Kosovo Police Service resumed normal operations in northern Mitrovica with KFOR support.

16. On 20 March, in Pec, an unknown person threw a hand grenade which exploded in the yard of a house owned by a Kosovo Albanian family. No casualties were reported.

17. On 28 March, Multinational Task Force North sent a patrol after a shot was reported against an UNMIK/Kosovo Police Service checkpoint in Zvecan. Nobody was injured and no evidence was found. The investigation is ongoing.

18. On 29 March, one Molotov cocktail was thrown at the head office of Norwegian Church Aid (humanitarian organization) in Mitrovica. Only one broken window was reported. In Pristina, two United Nations vehicles were slightly damaged by unknown persons.

19. On 30 March in Suvido, approximately 20 Kosovo Serbs and an unknown number of Kosovo Albanians threw stones at each other. They dispersed after one hour.

20. On 31 March, there was a shooting incident in Suvido. Cartridge cases were found on both the Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb side. A KFOR platoon and a KFOR reconnaissance helicopter were sent to support the Kosovo Police Service. No casualties were reported. The investigation is still ongoing but the incident is probably related to a land dispute.

21. A total of 474 incidents relating to drugs (14), counterfeit currency or documents (57), smuggling (33), explosions (5), miscellaneous criminal incidents (212), illegal weapons possession (46), weapons and ammunition seizures (32) and unexploded ordnance (75) were reported during this period, significantly more than in February 2008 (381).

KFOR operations

22. After the violence on 17 March, the overall security situation returned to a relative calm in the south while tension remains high in the north. UNMIK police presence was re-established at the courthouse in northern Mitrovica. The daily demonstrations continue in Mitrovica and in the Kosovo Serb enclaves. Multinational Task Force North was reinforced by the Italian Operational Reserve

Force battalion until 18 March, immediately followed by the German/Austrian Operational Reserve Force battalion from 15 March, two tactical reserve companies from Multinational Task Force West and one Kosovo tactical manoeuvre reserve company. The Multinational Specialized Unit conducted Operation Proximity in Multinational Task Force Centre to enhance the population's sense of safety.

Compliance

23. At its meeting on 27 March, the Disciplinary Board examined seven major acts of non-compliance with the KFOR Commander's statement of principles and UNMIK regulation 1999/8. All seven members of the Kosovo Protection Corps were dismissed.

Kosovo Protection Corps

24. There was no recruitment campaign for the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) in March 2008.

25. The current active personnel establishment is 2,891. There are 188 (6.5 per cent) active ethnic minority members (164 male, 24 female). The percentage of minorities within the Kosovo Protection Corps remains short of the goal set by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. There are still 113 open posts left in the active personnel establishment list. The reserve list includes 2,000 positions with 1,892 filled (including 48 ethnic minority members, which equates to 2.45 per cent).

26. The KFOR inspectorate for KPC headquarters conducted a two-day firefighting seminar for members of KPC. An assessment of training activities was presented at a KPC training and doctrine seminar.

27. After a formal request for assistance by the Government of Albania, a KPC demining team left KPC headquarters on 22 March accompanied by two officers of the Office of the KPC Coordinator. The demining team had been allocated a housing area to clear, approximately 1 km from the blast site. The team received extensive media coverage on Albanian television and demonstrated a good image of KPC. The Commander of KPC even visited the KPC demining team in Albania on 27 and 28 March.

28. During the month of March 2008, there were 12 ceremonies involving 1,227 KPC members. No incidents were reported.

Conclusion

29. In the current calm but volatile security context, KFOR remains prepared to deal with unrest and will continue to respond adequately to any attempt to disrupt the safe and secure environment throughout Kosovo, regardless of where it comes from.